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IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (currently amended) A martensitic stainless steel with a plastically-processed history consisting of C: 0.02 – 0.10%, Si: 0.05 – 1.0%, Mn: 0.05 – 0.95%, P: not more than 0.03%, S: not more than 0.01%, Cr: 9 – 15%, Ni: 1.0 – 4.5%, Al: not more than 0.05%, N: not more than 0.1%, Cu: 0.05 – 5%, and optionally Mo: 0.05 – 5% in mass %, the residual being Fe and impurities, wherein the contents of Cu and Mo satisfy the following formula (a),

$$0.2\% \leq \text{Mo} + \text{Cu}/4 \leq 5\% \quad \dots (\text{a})$$

and wherein the hardness is 30 – 45 in HRC and the amount of carbides in grain boundaries of prior austenite is not more than [[0.5]] 0.13 volume %.

2. (currently amended) A martensitic stainless steel with a plastically-processed history consisting of C: 0.02 – 0.10%, Si: 0.05 – 1.0%, Mn: 0.05 – 0.95%, P: not more than 0.03%, S: not more than 0.01%, Cr: 9 – 15%, Ni: 1.0 – 4.5%, Al: not more than 0.05%, N: not more than 0.1%, Cu: 0.05 – 5%, and optionally Mo: 0.05 – 5% in mass %, the residual being Fe and impurities, wherein the contents of Cu and Mo satisfy the following formula (b),

$$0.55\% \leq \text{Mo} + \text{Cu}/4 \leq 5\% \quad \dots (\text{b})$$

and wherein the hardness is 30 – 45 in HRC and the amount of carbides in grain boundaries of prior austenite is not more than [[0.5]] 0.13 volume %.

3. (currently amended) A martensitic stainless steel with a plastically-processed history consisting of C: 0.02 – 0.10%, Si: 0.05 – 1.0%, Mn: 0.05 – 0.95%, P: not more than 0.03%, S: not more than 0.01%, Cr: 9 – 15%, Ni: 1.0 – 4.5%, Al: not more than 0.05%, N: not more than 0.1%, Cu: 0.05 – 5%, optionally Mo: 0.05 – 5%, and at least one of the elements of Ti: 0.005 – 0.5%, V: 0.005 – 0.5% and Nb: 0.005 – 0.5% in mass %, the residual being Fe and impurities, wherein the contents of Cu and Mo satisfy the following formula (a),

$$0.2\% \leq \text{Mo} + \text{Cu}/4 \leq 5\% \quad \dots (\text{a})$$

and wherein the hardness is 30 – 45 in HRC the amount of carbides in grain boundaries of prior austenite is not more than [[0.5]] 0.13 volume %.

4. (currently amended) A martensitic stainless steel with a plastically-processed history consisting of C: 0.02 – 0.10%, Si: 0.05 – 1.0%, Mn: 0.05 – 0.95%, P: not more than 0.03%, S: not more than 0.01%, Cr: 9 – 15%, Ni: 1.0 – 4.5%, Al: not more than 0.05%, N: not more than 0.1%, Cu: 0.05 – 5%, optionally Mo: 0.05 – 5%, and at least one of the elements of Ti: 0.005 – 0.5%, V: 0.005 – 0.5% and Nb: 0.005 – 0.5% in mass %, the residual being Fe and impurities, wherein the contents of Cu and Mo satisfy the following formula (b),

$$0.55\% \leq \text{Mo} + \text{Cu}/4 \leq 5\% \quad \text{(b)}$$

and wherein the hardness is 30 – 45 in HRC and the amount of carbides in grain boundaries of prior austenite is not more than [[0.5]] 0.13 volume %.

5. (currently amended) A martensitic stainless steel with a plastically-processed history consisting of C: 0.02 – 0.10%, Si: 0.05 – 1.0%, Mn: 0.05 – 0.95%, P: not more than 0.03%, S: not more than 0.01%, Cr: 9 – 15%, Ni: 1.0 – 4.5%, Al: not more than 0.05%, N: not more than 0.1%, Cu: 0.05 – 5%, optionally Mo: 0.05 – 5%, and one or more elements of B: 0.0002 – 0.005%, Ca: 0.0003 – 0.005%, Mg: 0.0003 – 0.005% and rare earth elements: 0.0003 – 0.005% in mass %, the residual being Fe and impurities, wherein the contents of Cu and Mo satisfy the following formula (a),

$$0.2\% \leq \text{Mo} + \text{Cu}/4 \leq 5\% \quad \dots \text{(a)}$$

and wherein the hardness is 30 – 45 in HRC, the amount of carbides in grain boundaries of prior austenite is not more than [[0.5]] 0.13 volume %.

6. (currently amended) A martensitic stainless steel with a plastically-processed history consisting of C: 0.02 – 0.10%, Si: 0.05 – 1.0%, Mn: 0.05 – 0.95%, P: not more than 0.03%, S: not more than 0.01%, Cr: 9 – 15%, Ni: 1.0 – 4.5%, Al: not more than 0.05%, N: not more than 0.1%, Cu: 0.05 – 5%, optionally Mo: 0.05 – 5%, and one or more elements of B: 0.0002 – 0.005%, Ca: 0.0003 – 0.005%, Mg: 0.0003 – 0.005% and rare earth elements: 0.0003 – 0.005% in mass %, the residual being Fe and impurities, wherein the contents of Cu and Mo satisfy the following formula (b),

$$0.55\% \leq \text{Mo} + \text{Cu}/4 \leq 5\% \quad \dots \text{(b)}$$

and wherein the hardness is 30 – 45 in HRC, the amount of carbides in grain boundaries of prior austenite is not more than [[0.5]] 0.13 volume %.

7. (currently amended) A martensitic stainless steel with a plastically-processed history consisting of C: 0.02 – 0.10%, Si: 0.05 – 1.0%, Mn: 0.05 – 0.95%, P: not more than 0.03%, S: not more than 0.01%, Cr: 9 – 15%, Ni: 1.0 – 4.5%, Al: not more than 0.05%, N: not more than 0.1%, Cu: 0.05 – 5%, optionally Mo: 0.05 – 5%, at least one of the elements of Ti: 0.005 – 0.5%, V: 0.005 – 0.5% and Nb: 0.005 – 0.5%, and one or more elements of B: 0.0002 – 0.005%, Ca: 0.0003 – 0.005%, Mg: 0.0003 – 0.005% and rare earth elements: 0.0003 – 0.005% in mass %, the residual being Fe and impurities, wherein the contents of Cu and Mo satisfy the following formula (a),

$$0.2\% \leq \text{Mo} + \text{Cu}/4 \leq 5\% \quad \dots \text{(a)}$$

and wherein the hardness is 30 – 45 in HRC, the amount of carbides in grain boundaries of prior austenite is not more than [[0.5]] 0.13 volume %.

8. (currently amended) A martensitic stainless steel with a plastically-processed history consisting of C: 0.02 – 0.10%, Si: 0.05 – 1.0%, Mn: 0.05 – 0.95%, P: not more than 0.03%, S: not more than 0.01%, Cr: 9 – 15%, Ni: 1.0 – 4.5%, Al: not more than 0.05%, N: not more than 0.1%, Cu: 0.05 – 5%, optionally Mo: 0.05 – 5%, at least one of the elements of Ti: 0.005 – 0.5%, V: 0.005 – 0.5% and Nb: 0.005 – 0.5%, and one or more elements of B: 0.0002 – 0.005%, Ca: 0.0003 – 0.005%, Mg: 0.0003 – 0.005% and rare earth elements: 0.0003 – 0.005% in mass %, the residual being Fe and impurities, wherein the contents of Cu and Mo satisfy the following formula (b),

$$0.55\% \leq \text{Mo} + \text{Cu}/4 \leq 5\% \quad \dots \text{(b)}$$

and wherein the hardness is 30 – 45 in HRC, the amount of carbides in grain boundaries of prior austenite is not more than [[0.5]] 0.13 volume %.

9-12. canceled.

13. (currently amended) A martensitic stainless steel with a plastically-processed history consisting of C: 0.02 – 0.10%, Si: 0.05 – 1.0%, Mn: 0.05 – 0.95%, P: not more than 0.03%, S: not more than 0.01%, Cr: 9 – 15%, Ni: 1.0 – 4.5%, Al: not more than 0.05%, N: not more than 0.1%,

Cu: 0.05 – 5%, and Mo: 0.05 – 5% in mass %, the residual being Fe and impurities, wherein the contents of Cu satisfy the following formula (a),

$$0.2\% \leq \text{Mo} + \text{Cu}/4 \leq 5\% \quad \dots \text{(a)}$$

and wherein the hardness is 30 – 45 in HRC, the amount of carbides in grain boundaries of prior austenite is not more than [[0.5]] 0.13 volume %, the martensitic stainless steel having a structure resulting from one of quenching, air cooling, quenching followed by a 400 °C or lower tempering treatment, or air cooling followed by a 400 °C or lower tempering treatment, and the amounts of Cu and Mo effective to form a sulfide layer on a formed chromium oxide layer, the sulfide layer formed as a result of the martensitic stainless steel being subjected to a sulfur-containing environment.

14. (currently amended) A martensitic stainless steel with a plastically-processed history consisting of C: 0.02 – 0.10%, Si: 0.05 – 1.0%, Mn: 0.05 – 0.95%, P: not more than 0.03%, S: not more than 0.01%, Cr: 9 – 15%, Ni: 1.0 – 4.5%, Al: not more than 0.05%, and N: not more than 0.1%, Cu: 0.05 – 5%, and Mo: 0.05 – 5% in mass %, the residual being Fe and impurities, wherein the contents of Cu and Mo satisfy the following formula (b),

$$0.55\% \leq \text{Mo} + \text{Cu}/4 \leq 5\% \quad \dots \text{(b)}$$

and wherein the hardness is 30 – 45 in HRC, the amount of carbides in grain boundaries of prior austenite is not more than [[0.5]] 0.13 volume %, the martensitic stainless steel having a structure resulting from one of quenching, air cooling, quenching followed by a 400 °C or lower tempering treatment, or air cooling followed by a 400 °C or lower tempering treatment, and the amounts of Cu and Mo effective to form a sulfide layer on a formed chromium oxide layer, the sulfide layer formed as a result of the martensitic stainless steel being subjected to a sulfur-containing environment.

15. (currently amended) A martensitic stainless steel with a plastically-processed history consisting of C: 0.02 – 0.10%, Si: 0.05 – 1.0%, Mn: 0.05 – 0.95%, P: not more than 0.03%, S: not more than 0.01%, Cr: 9 – 15%, Ni: 1.0 – 4.5%, Al: not more than 0.05%, N: not more than 0.1%, Cu: 0.05 – 5%, and Mo: 0.05 – 5%, and at least one of the elements of Ti: 0.005 – 0.5%, V: 0.005 – 0.5% and Nb: 0.005 – 0.5% in mass %, the residual being Fe and impurities, wherein the contents of Cu and Mo satisfy the following formula (a),

$$0.2\% \leq \text{Mo} + \text{Cu}/4 \leq 5\% \quad \dots \text{(a)}$$

and wherein the hardness is 30 – 45 in HRC, the amount of carbides in grain boundaries of prior austenite is not more than [[0.5]] 0.13 volume %, the martensitic stainless steel having a structure resulting from one of quenching, air cooling, quenching followed by a 400 °C or lower tempering treatment, or air cooling followed by a 400 °C or lower tempering treatment, and the amounts of Cu and Mo effective to form a sulfide layer on a formed chromium oxide layer, the sulfide layer formed as a result of the martensitic stainless steel being subjected to a sulfur-containing environment.

16. (currently amended) A martensitic stainless steel with a plastically-processed history consisting of C: 0.02 – 0.10%, Si: 0.05 – 1.0%, Mn: 0.05 – 0.95%, P: not more than 0.03%, S: not more than 0.01%, Cr: 9 – 15%, Ni: 1.0 – 4.5%, Al: not more than 0.05%, N: not more than 0.1%, Cu: 0.05 – 5%, Mo: 0.05 – 5%, and at least one of the elements of Ti: 0.005 – 0.5%, V: 0.005 – 0.5% and Nb: 0.005 – 0.5% in mass %, the residual being Fe and impurities, wherein the contents of Cu and Mo satisfy the following formula (b),

$$0.55\% \leq \text{Mo} + \text{Cu}/4 \leq 5\% \quad \text{(b)}$$

and wherein the hardness is 30 – 45 in HRC, the amount of carbides in grain boundaries of prior austenite is not more than [[0.5]] 0.13 volume %, the martensitic stainless steel having a structure resulting from one of quenching, air cooling, quenching followed by a 400 °C or lower tempering treatment, or air cooling followed by a 400 °C or lower tempering treatment, and the amounts of Cu and Mo effective to form a sulfide layer on a formed chromium oxide layer, the sulfide layer formed as a result of the martensitic stainless steel being subjected to a sulfur-containing environment.

17. (currently amended) A martensitic stainless steel with a plastically-processed history consisting of C: 0.02 – 0.10%, Si: 0.05 – 1.0%, Mn: 0.05 – 0.95%, P: not more than 0.03%, S: not more than 0.01%, Cr: 9 – 15%, Ni: 1.0 – 4.5%, Al: not more than 0.05%, N: not more than 0.1%, Cu: 0.05 – 5%, Mo: 0.05 – 5%, and one or more elements of B: 0.0002 – 0.005%, Ca: 0.0003 – 0.005%, Mg: 0.0003 – 0.005% and rare earth elements: 0.0003 – 0.005% in mass %, the residual being Fe and impurities, wherein the contents of Cu and Mo satisfy the following formula (a),

$$0.2\% \leq \text{Mo} + \text{Cu}/4 \leq 5\% \quad \dots (\text{a})$$

and wherein the hardness is 30 – 45 in HRC, the amount of carbides in grain boundaries of prior austenite is not more than [[0.5]] 0.13 volume %, the martensitic stainless steel having a structure resulting from one of quenching, air cooling, quenching followed by a 400 °C or lower tempering treatment, or air cooling followed by a 400 °C or lower tempering treatment, and the amounts of Cu and Mo effective to form a sulfide layer on a formed chromium oxide layer, the sulfide layer formed as a result of the martensitic stainless steel being subjected to a sulfur-containing environment.

18. (currently amended) A martensitic stainless steel with a plastically-processed history consisting of C: 0.02 – 0.10%, Si: 0.05 – 1.0%, Mn: 0.05 – 0.95%, P: not more than 0.03%, S: not more than 0.01%, Cr: 9 – 15%, Ni: 1.0 – 4.5%, Al: not more than 0.05%, N: not more than 0.1%, Cu: 0.05 – 5%, Mo: 0.05 – 5%, and one or more elements of B: 0.0002 – 0.005%, Ca: 0.0003 – 0.005%, Mg: 0.0003 – 0.005% and rare earth elements: 0.0003 – 0.005% in mass %, the residual being Fe and impurities, wherein the contents of Cu and Mo satisfy the following formula (b),

$$0.55\% \leq \text{Mo} + \text{Cu}/4 \leq 5\% \quad \dots (\text{b})$$

and wherein the hardness is 30 – 45 in HRC, the amount of carbides in grain boundaries of prior austenite is not more than [[0.5]] 0.13 volume %, the martensitic stainless steel having a structure resulting from one of quenching, air cooling, quenching followed by a 400 °C or lower tempering treatment, or air cooling followed by a 400 °C or lower tempering treatment, and the amounts of Cu and Mo effective to form a sulfide layer on a formed chromium oxide layer, the sulfide layer formed as a result of the martensitic stainless steel being subjected to a sulfur-containing environment.

19. (currently amended) A martensitic stainless steel with a plastically-processed history consisting of C: 0.02 – 0.10%, Si: 0.05 – 1.0%, Mn: 0.05 – 0.95%, P: not more than 0.03%, S: not more than 0.01%, Cr: 9 – 15%, Ni: 1.0 – 4.5%, Al: not more than 0.05%, N: not more than 0.1%, Cu: 0.05 – 5%, Mo: 0.05 – 5%, at least one of the elements of Ti: 0.005 – 0.5%, V: 0.005 – 0.5% and Nb: 0.005 – 0.5%, and one or more elements of B: 0.0002 – 0.005%, Ca: 0.0003 –

0.005%, Mg: 0.0003 – 0.005% and rare earth elements: 0.0003 – 0.005% in mass %, the residual being Fe and impurities, wherein the contents of Cu and Mo satisfy the following formula (a),

$$0.2\% \leq \text{Mo} + \text{Cu}/4 \leq 5\% \quad \dots \text{(a)}$$

and wherein the hardness is 30 – 45 in HRC, the amount of carbides in grain boundaries of prior austenite is not more than [[0.5]] 0.13 volume %, the martensitic stainless steel having a structure resulting from one of quenching, air cooling, quenching followed by a 400 °C or lower tempering treatment, or air cooling followed by a 400 °C or lower tempering treatment, and the amounts of Cu and Mo effective to form a sulfide layer on a formed chromium oxide layer, the sulfide layer formed as a result of the martensitic stainless steel being subjected to a sulfur-containing environment.

20. (currently amended) A martensitic stainless steel with a plastically-processed history consisting of C: 0.02 – 0.10%, Si: 0.05 – 1.0%, Mn: 0.05 – 0.95%, P: not more than 0.03%, S: not more than 0.01%, Cr: 9 – 15%, Ni: 1.0 – 4.5%, Al: not more than 0.05%, N: not more than 0.1%, Cu: 0.05 – 5%, optionally Mo: 0.05 – 5%, at least one of the elements of Ti: 0.005 – 0.5%, V: 0.005 – 0.5% and Nb: 0.005 – 0.5%, and one or more elements of B: 0.0002 – 0.005%, Ca: 0.0003 – 0.005%, Mg: 0.0003 – 0.005% and rare earth elements: 0.0003 – 0.005% in mass %, the residual being Fe and impurities, wherein the contents of Cu and Mo satisfy the following formula (b),

$$0.55\% \leq \text{Mo} + \text{Cu}/4 \leq 5\% \quad \dots \text{(b)}$$

and wherein the hardness is 30 – 45 in HRC, the amount of carbides in grain boundaries of prior austenite is not more than [[0.5]] 0.13 volume %, the martensitic stainless steel having a structure resulting from one of quenching, air cooling, quenching followed by a 400 °C or lower tempering treatment, or air cooling followed by a 400 °C or lower tempering treatment, and the amounts of Cu and Mo effective to form a sulfide layer on a formed chromium oxide layer, the sulfide layer formed as a result of the martensitic stainless steel being subjected to a sulfur-containing environment.